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Embroidered Paper

University — Université

University of Alberta

Degree for which thesis was presented — Grade pour lequel cette thèse fut présentée

Master of Arts

Year this degree conferred — Année d'obtention de ce grade

1981

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A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL, 1981

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

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Stephen A. Scobie

Supervisor

W. [illegible]

Douglas Barbour

Date June 29, 1981

DEDICATION

In honour of Ivan Zbura (1860-1940) of Beaver Creek, Alberta, pioneer farmer and the first published Ukrainian poet in Canada.

ABSTRACT

The poems in Embroidered Paper are a representative sampling of work which I completed in the period 1977-1981, with each chapter/series representing one current or thread in my creative development over this four-year span of time. As the selection was made to show the range of my poetic interests, it includes samples of visual, sound and lyric poetry, as well as several translations and adaptations of traditional folk songs. Such a miscellany approach may, of course, be less than satisfying for readers who crave a strictly thematic sense of order and unity, but I feel it more accurately reflects both my work habits as a writer and my aesthetic principles. The former are characterized by my acceptance of the multi-directional nature of my productive impulses, while the latter are defined by my committment to diversity and my belief that contemporary poets must be versatile and capable of employing a variety of expressive strategies in responding creatively to experience.

Although Embroidered Paper ultimately springs from the hidden recesses of the creative imagination, it also strives to incorporate and articulate the results of my research into poetry, language and

communications. Indeed, I have consciously tried to mediate my creative growth by attempting to concomitantly discover and construct a coherent theoretical and historical framework for my literary adventures. This is why many of the poems in Embroidered Paper are "homage" pieces that acknowledge my debt to sources ranging from pictography to calligraphy, from Christian anagrams to Concrete constellations, and from Baroque poetics to the techniques of modern advertising.

The predominance of visual forms in the Embroidered Paper selection, as well as the over-representation of poems in the Ukrainian language, can be attributed to several factors including practical considerations, the influence of my research in my second language, and my belief that Canadian writers and critics must start tapping the vast multicultural potential of Canadian literature.

But, perhaps the real motivation behind the Concrete and Ukrainian orientation of the selection stems from the implicit argument that visual poetry communicates in a language that is inherently more international than English or other "world" languages. For the minimalist textual inclination of visual verse, in combination with its graphic expressiveness,

enables it to transcend linguistic boundaries with greater facility and veracity than the best translations of conventional linear verse are capable of. In the context of our ever-shrinking and tension-fraught global village, this ability to leap across frontiers of identity with gestalt-like efficacy can only be regarded as a step forward into the future, since poetry has always been in the catalytic forefront of linguistic evolution. It is important that we recognize, however, that this step forward has been made possible not by an infantile rejection of the past, but by the conscious assimilation of the lessons to be learned from literary and linguistic history. With this in mind I would like to advance as an appropriate slogan for the postmodern age, "Backwards into the future, forwards into the past."

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank all of the people who assisted in the preparation of these poems: Darcia Antonishka, Malcolm Archibald, Myroslaw Bodnaruk, Mark Ferbey, Ihor Hluszok, Dr. Andrij Hornjatkevyc, Vera Loszuk, Myron Sembaliuk, Lubomyr Szuch, Paul Teterenko and Dr. Dore Tostiuk. I would also like to thank the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies for allowing me to use their Ukrainian typewriter.

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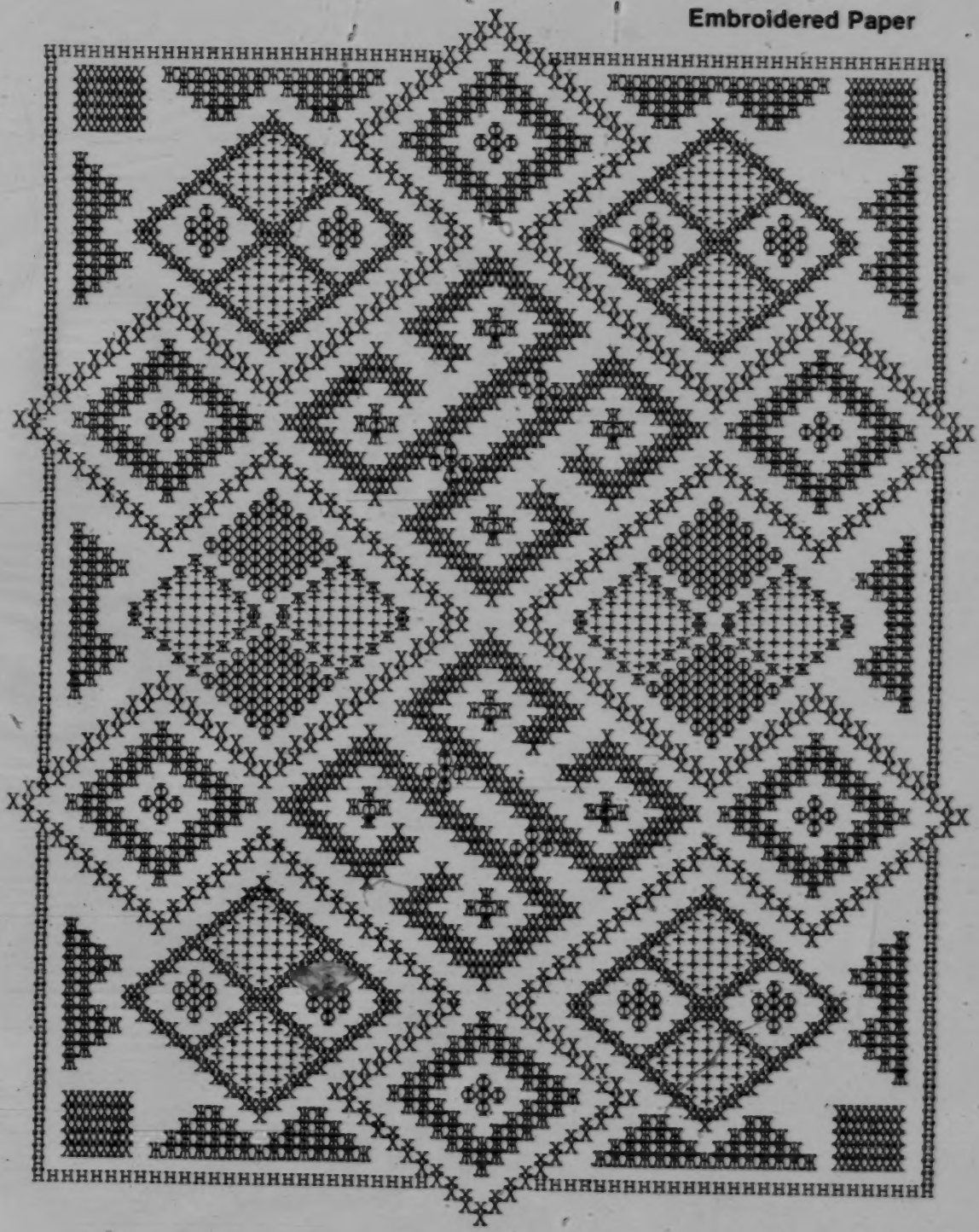
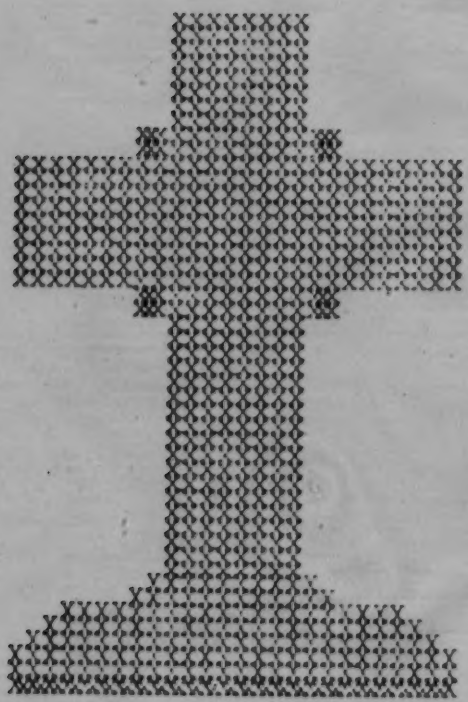
Embroidered Paper

Embroidered Paper



Камінний хрест



Found Poem: In a Cemetery near Dauphin

NEGRYCH ANDREW
Sept 20, 1913
Sept 23, 1913
RIP

NEGRYCH ANTHONY
Sept 23, 1915
Mar 3, 1916
RIP

NEGRYCH ROZALKA
Dec 11, 1919
Oct 10, 1920
RIP

NEGRYCH ANILKA
Nov 4, 1922
Mar 30, 1923
RIP

NEGRYCH VERA
Oct 8, 1923
Oct 15, 1923
RIP

Город

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С р р р р р М М М М К А П У С Т А к у К С
И а а а а а І І І І К А П У С Т А у к А И
А б б б б б Д Д Д Д горохгорохгор р у В А
Г о о о о о О О О О охптахугороссі у р У Г
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С С
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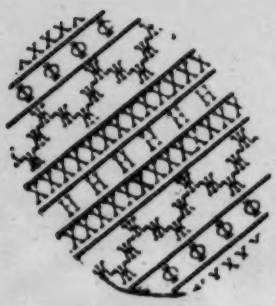
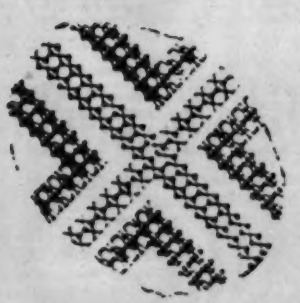
Письменний писанкар





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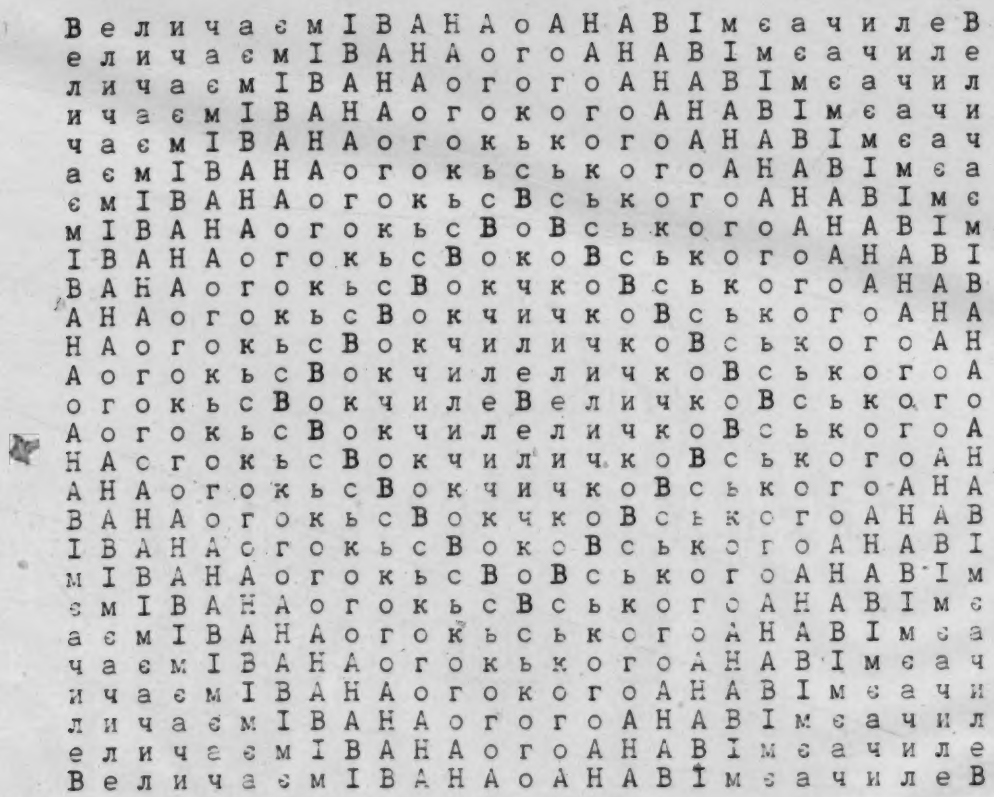


А це що — поезо/малярство?

ПИТАЮ ВАС:Шевченко чи Семенко?

електрифікована муза
є револьвер революції

А може Ви маєте інші Бажання?

Да Да Да Да Да Да

НЄТ!

один крок вперед
а два назад
такий наш літературний фокстрот.

танцюють

пан доктор пан директор

пан редактор пан інженер

пандора пані Плічка Пантелеймон Куліш

і панфутурист

ПА-НІ-КА!

Маяковський загубив свої панталони!

а з носа тече слиз

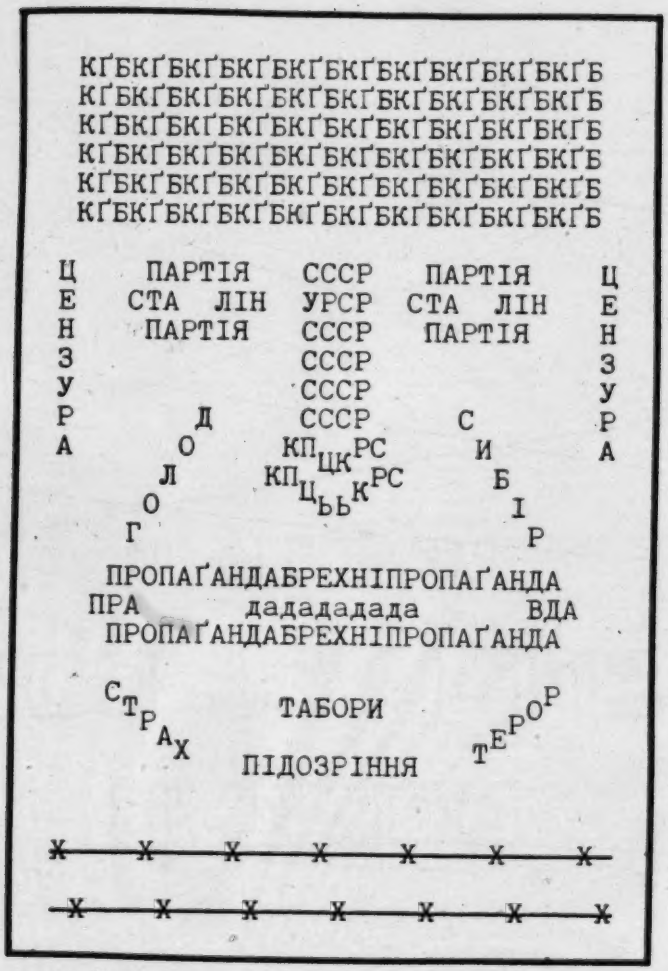
КАП КАП КАП КАП

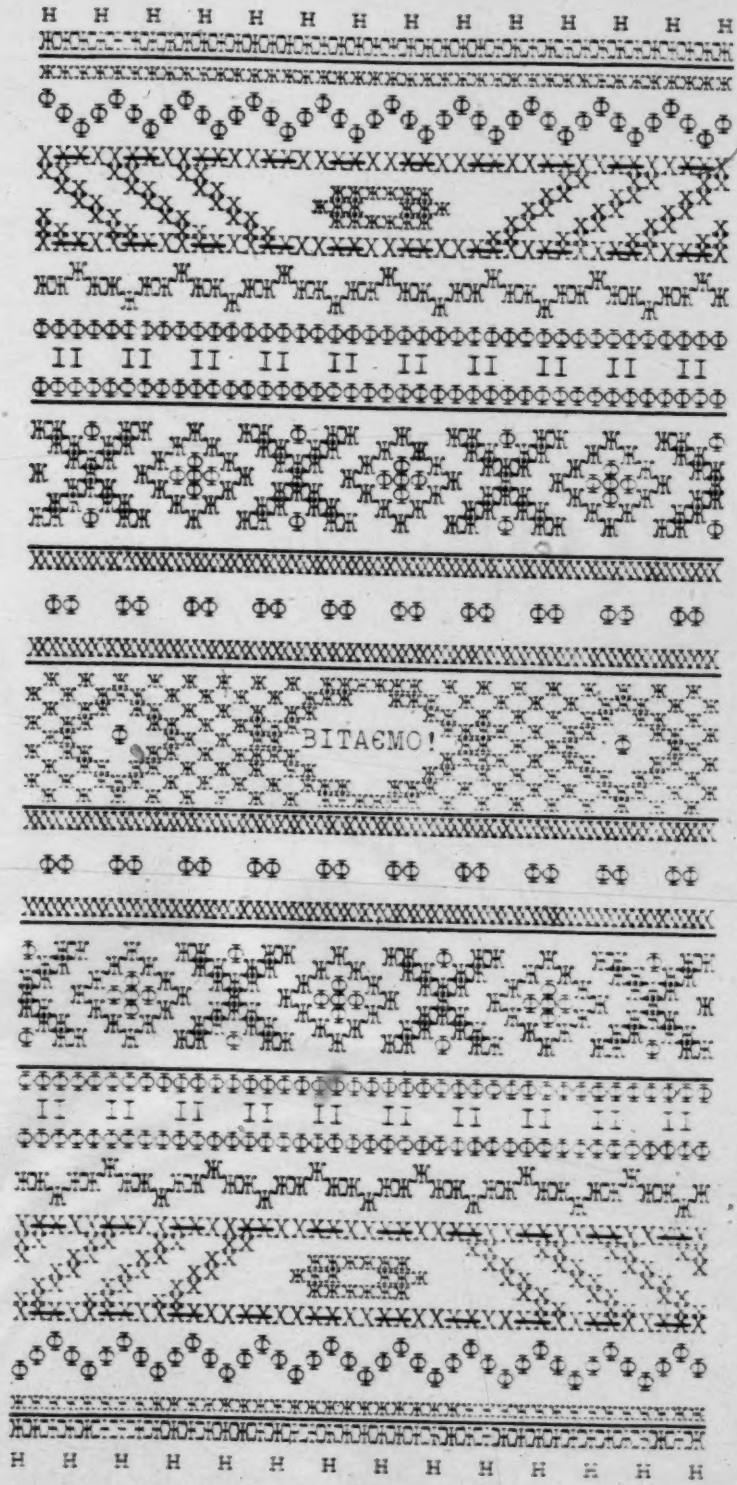
капітальний хлоп/цей Московський мужичок

РАЗОМ вишлем цвіти

товаришеві Сталіну

„Хохол" Голота (портрет)




ВІТАЄМО!

Song of Leaving

Song of Leaving

I am leaving today for a new land
Where I'll start a new life of my own
Plan to settle Canadian prairie repeat
Hope to find me a place where I can grow

I am leaving this land for another
Where they say that the future waits for me
Where the steppes are as wide as an ocean repeat
Where they say that a man might be free

Do not weep bitter tears for me mother
Though my journey now takes me far away
I'll remember the love that you gave me repeat
I will cherish my mother Ukraine

I am leaving today for a new land
Where I'll start a new life of my own
Plan to settle Canadian prairie repeat
Gonna find me a place where I can grow

The Song of the Coquettes

My name is Steffie
And I'm pretty
All of the boys
Would love to hold me
Tsi, tsio, hai-ia-ia-io! repeat
But they never want
To let me go!

My name is Anna
And I'm witty
Men are big boys
And that's a pity
Tsi, tsio, hai-ia-ia-io! repeat
Their jealous tantrums
Leavé me cold!

My name is Luba
And I'm giddy
Give me a kiss
It makes me tipsy
Tsi, tsio, hai-ia-ia-io! repeat
But don't push your luck
The answer's NO!

We are all young
And slim and sexy
All of the boys
Say we're perplexing
Tsi, tsio, hai-ia-ia-io! repeat
They only want
Fresh fields to sow!

My name is Vera
And I'm busty
All of the boys
Said "trust me, trust me"
Tsi, tsio, hai-ia-ia-io! repeat
They had their fun
Then sent me home!

Ivanka's Song

April in Kiev
Soft as a breeze
Murmuring Dnieper
Whispering trees
Chestnuts in blossom — repeat
Line the cobbled streets
Stars light our eyes
When we meet

Under a shady
Green canopy
My love is waiting
Waiting for me
He brings me flowers — repeat
In a bright array
He brings me amber
And jade

Evenings in Kiev
City of dreams
Golden cathedrals
Shimmering streets
His gentle fingers — repeat
Running through my hair
Make me feel lighter
Than air

Stars are like diamonds
Sprinkled above
Clouds made of cotton
When you're in love
When we're together — repeat
Music fills my heart
Time seems to stop
When we part

Love's like a meadow
When it's in bloom
Fragrant in April
Withered in June
Lonely I wander — repeat
In the autumn rain
Only his memory
Remains

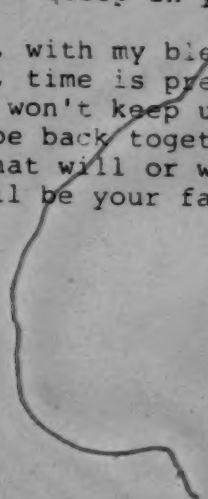
Go now, goodbye...

Whither are you going?
What chill wind is blowing?
When will I see you again?
Stay this night beside me repeat
Hold me, don't deny me
One last hour with you

Tell me, don't deceive me
Must you go and leave me?
Why must your dreams break my heart?
Can't you take me with you? repeat
Can't you see I love you?
I belong by your side

Wear this shirt I've sewn you
For each hour I've known you
And may it keep you from harm
An old gypsy told me repeat
That one day you'll hold me
And I'll sleep in your arms

Go now, with my blessing
Go now, time is pressing
Oceans won't keep us apart
We'll be back together repeat
Come what will or whether
And I'll be your fair bride



Yevdokha's Complaint

My husband is a drunken louse
My husband is a drunken louse
He is a drunkard
And he's a sluggard
My husband is a drunken louse

repeat

His only love is alcohol
His only love is alcohol
Oh! how he beats me
And he mistreats
His only love is alcohol

repeat

Stop! do not beat me tipsy spouse
Stop! do not beat me tipsy spouse
I'll gladly leave you
All of the children
And walk to freedom out the door!

repeat

My mother used to beat me

My mother used to beat me
With a whip of willow
And scolded me for seeing — repeat
A corporal in the meadow

But I would love my soldier
Until the birds were cheeping
And watered all the hinges — repeat
To keep the door from creaking

I watered all the hinges
And tiptoed 'cross the threshold
So careful not to stumble — repeat
And wake the sleeping household

But mother wasn't sleeping
She heard my barefoot patter
And smiled as she remembered — repeat
That she once was a daughter

God Eternal

God Eternal
Master, Creator
Spirit Sublime — repeat
Truth Divine
Lord of All
Throughout All Time
His Will Guides All Men

Baby Jesus
Sleeps in a manger
Three gentle hearts — repeat
See the star
Bearing gifts
They travel far
Show their love for Him

Lord Eternal
Come, let us Praise Him
White is the Dove — repeat
From above
Bearing word
Of His sweet Love
Praise the Lord Amen

The Caroller's Carol

Best of health good neighbours
May your household prosper
Celebrate!

refrain:

Celebrate the birth of Jesus
Christ our Lord
Blessed Savior!

Set a festive table
Raise a glass of spirit
Celebrate!

refrain

Christ is born let's praise Him
Join in joyful singing
Celebrate!

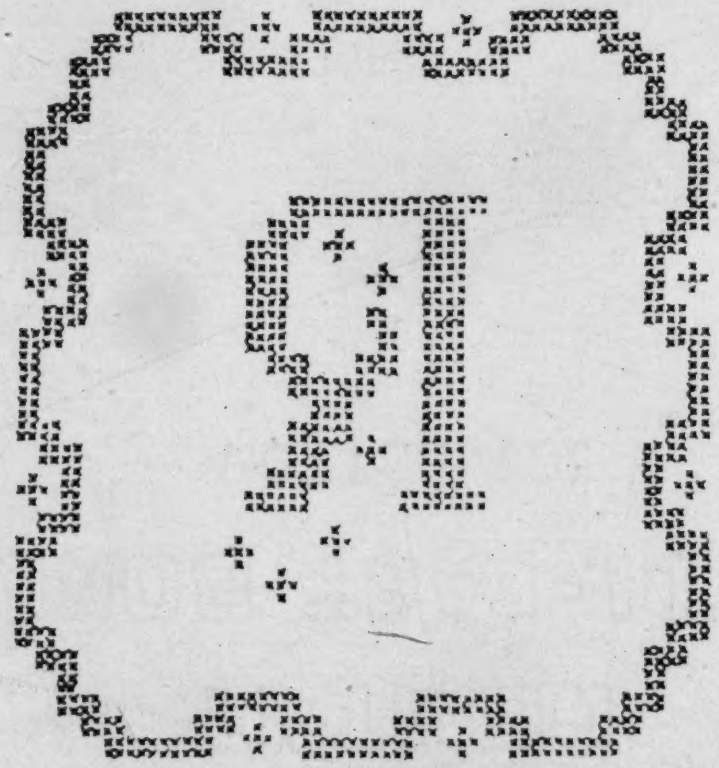
refrain

Let us all be brothers
Live in peace together
Celebrate!

refrain

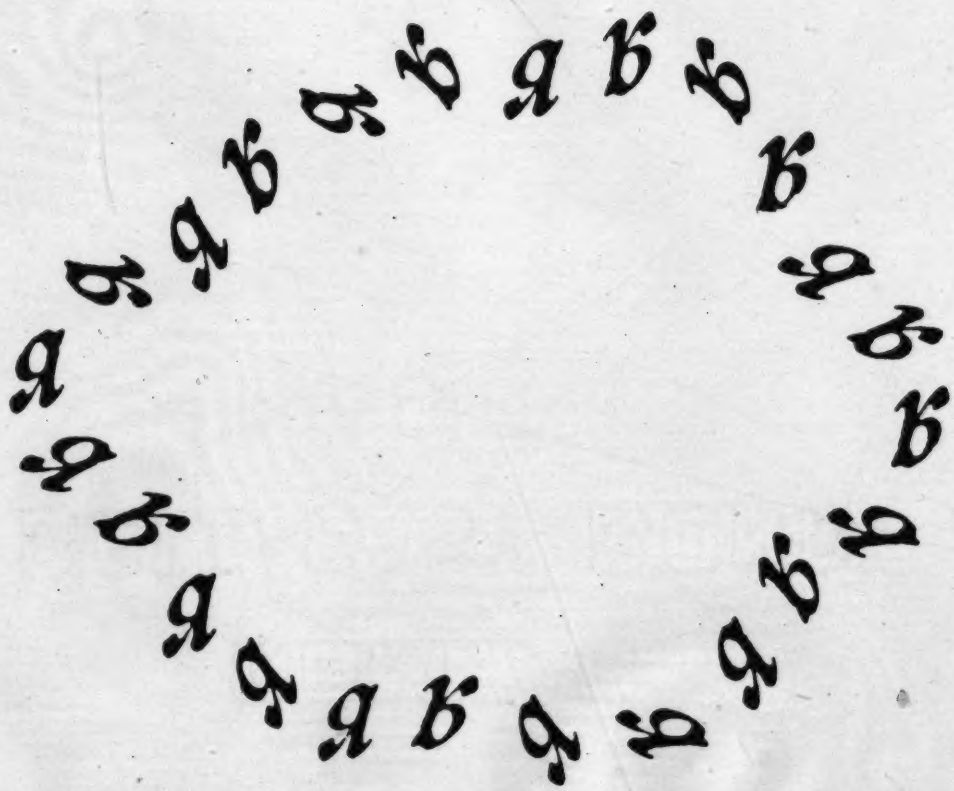
Autobiographica

Я вишиватель віршів

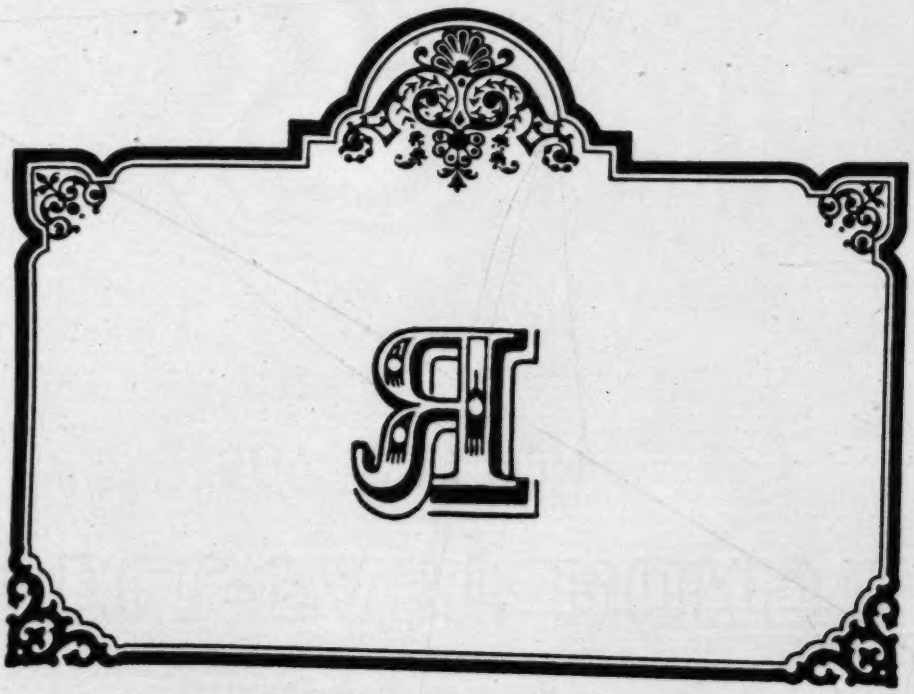


Я у весні

Я гуляю в полі літом



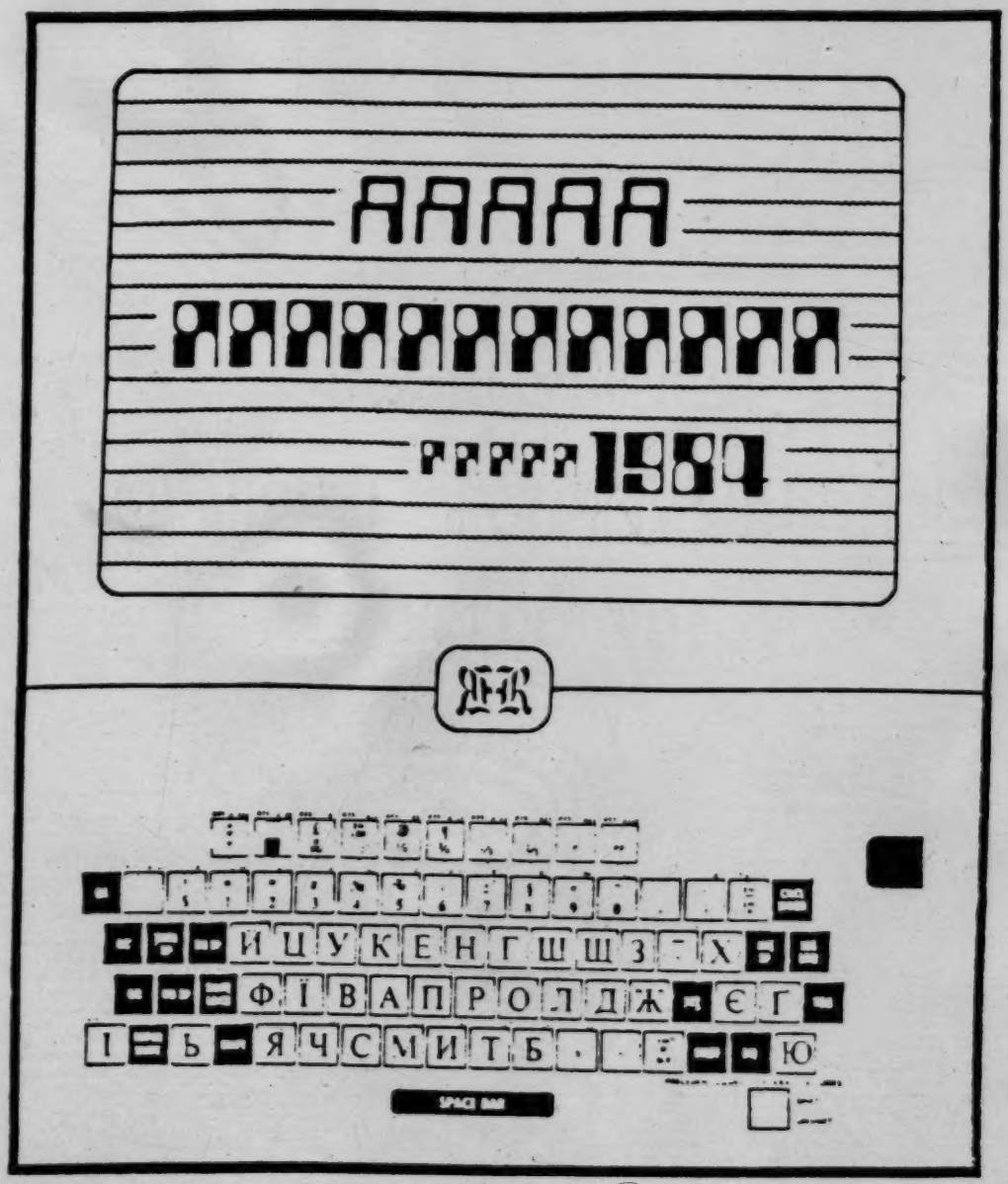
Я артист на паперовій сцені



Що я бачив у дзеркалі

Я під мікроскопом

Я технократ-автомат



Variations on a Theme

Forbidden Fruit
& other poems

Eve

Her tight sweater
makes round apples
of her delicious breasts

Psst!

Hey you
with the brown eyes
and the sweet cupcakes
for tits

I want you
to listen to me
careful
cuz these are words
from a cocky kid:

watch me girl watch me
curl around you
like a mist

lulling you with words
as graceful as
arabesques

quick! to steal
a breathless
kiss

If you
look into my eyes girl
you will see this:

these words gathered
in pools
on this page
where I have paused
to sip
from the fountain
of your lips

Cameo

I love
the way
she kicks
her shoes
beneath
the quilted
bed
and I love
the way
she turns
and bends
steps lightly
from
her dress

I love
the way
her body
yearns
to feel
our bodies
press
I love
the way
her scented
hair
spills soft
upon
my face

I love
the way
her pendant
swings
between
her giddy
breasts
and
the way
she calls
my name
in hoarse
and hungry
breaths

Journey

my lips
leave your lips
leave wet prints
on your cheeks
on your throat

brush lightly the curves
of your honeysuckle breasts

cup tenderly each tip
of your firm brown flesh

drift leisurely across
your undulating belly
fill your hollows with
my quick warm breath

linger teasingly
above the furrows
of your salt sweet skin

descend
to lead you trembling
through the peaks
of your blossoming
desire

Skylight

my lady loves
to love me
she leads me
to her bed

with hushed words
she quiets me
with loving hands
she smooths me

she hugs me warmly
she squeezes me
she bites me playfully
she teases me

she is slow
to undress me
yet eager
to please me

my lady loves
to love me
her lips descend
my naked body
she moves gracefully
above me
she settles lightly
around me

my lady rides high on me
lost in clouds of semen

Brunch snack

after
we make love
she fetches a
bright red apple
from the fridge

we eat it
with relish

as it is

cold

quenching

and sweet

Leaving

before
I leave
we embrace

your caftan
is open

my coat
is undone

when I call
three days later

we are awkward

Message for Olénka

this white page —
a paper sail

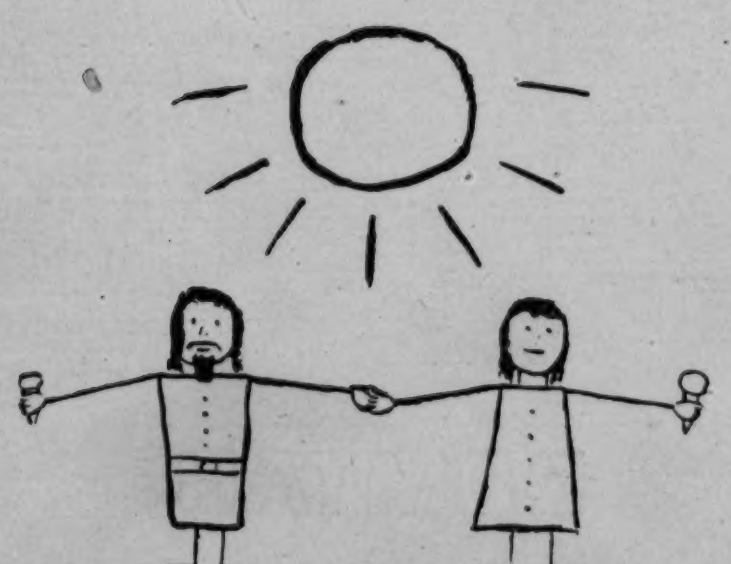
these words —
a breath of wind

I'm sending
this message
of love
to you

afterthoughts

the gently
shadowed
scents
of your body
linger
cling
tease
and annoy —

they
are like afterthoughts
of the way things
should be



this pome is for
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Tunes for the Typewriter

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WHEN MACHINES MAKE MACHINES SOMETHING MUST BE MISSING
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Snowpoem Poemflakes

each poem is a snowflake
each poem is unique
each poem is a snowflake
each snowflake is unique

each snowflake is a poem
each snowflake is unique
each snowflake is a poem
each poem is unique

is each poem a snowflake?
is each poem unique?
is each poem a snowflake?
are snowflakes unique?

is each snowflake a poem?
is each snowflake unique?
is each snowflake a poem?
are poems unique?

snowpoems are poemflakes
snowpoems are unique
snowpoems are poemflakes
snowpoems are unique

is snow a poemflake,
each poemflake, unique?
are poems, snowflakes,
each snowpoem, unique?

poemsnows are snowflakes
poemsnows are unique
poemsnows are snowflakes
poemsnows are unique

poemflake snowflake
are unique poems
snowflake poemflakes
are unique flakes

snow flakes
poem flakes
snow flakes
poem flakes

each snowflake is a poemflake
each snowflake is unique
each poemflake is a snowflake
each poemflake is unique

snowpoem poemflakes are unique poems
snowpoem poemflakes are unique flakes

snow snow snow snow
poem poem poem poem

snowpoem poem, snowpoem flakes
snowpoem poem, snowpoem flakes

each poem is a snowflake
each poem is a dream
each poem is a snowflake
each poem is a dream

snowflake poemflakes are dream poems
snowflake poemflakes are dream flakes

each snowflake is a poemflake
each snowflake is a dream
each poemflake is a snowflake
each poemflake is a dream

each poem is a love poem
each poem is a dream
each poem is a love poem
each poem is a dream

love is like snowflakes
each love is a dream
love is like poemflakes
each poem is a dream

each poem is a love poem
each poem is a dream
each poem is a love poem
each love is a dream

lovepoems are snowflakes
lovepoems are dreams
lovepoems are snowflakes
lovepoems are dreams

each love is a poemflake
each love is a dream
each love is a poemflake
each love is a dream

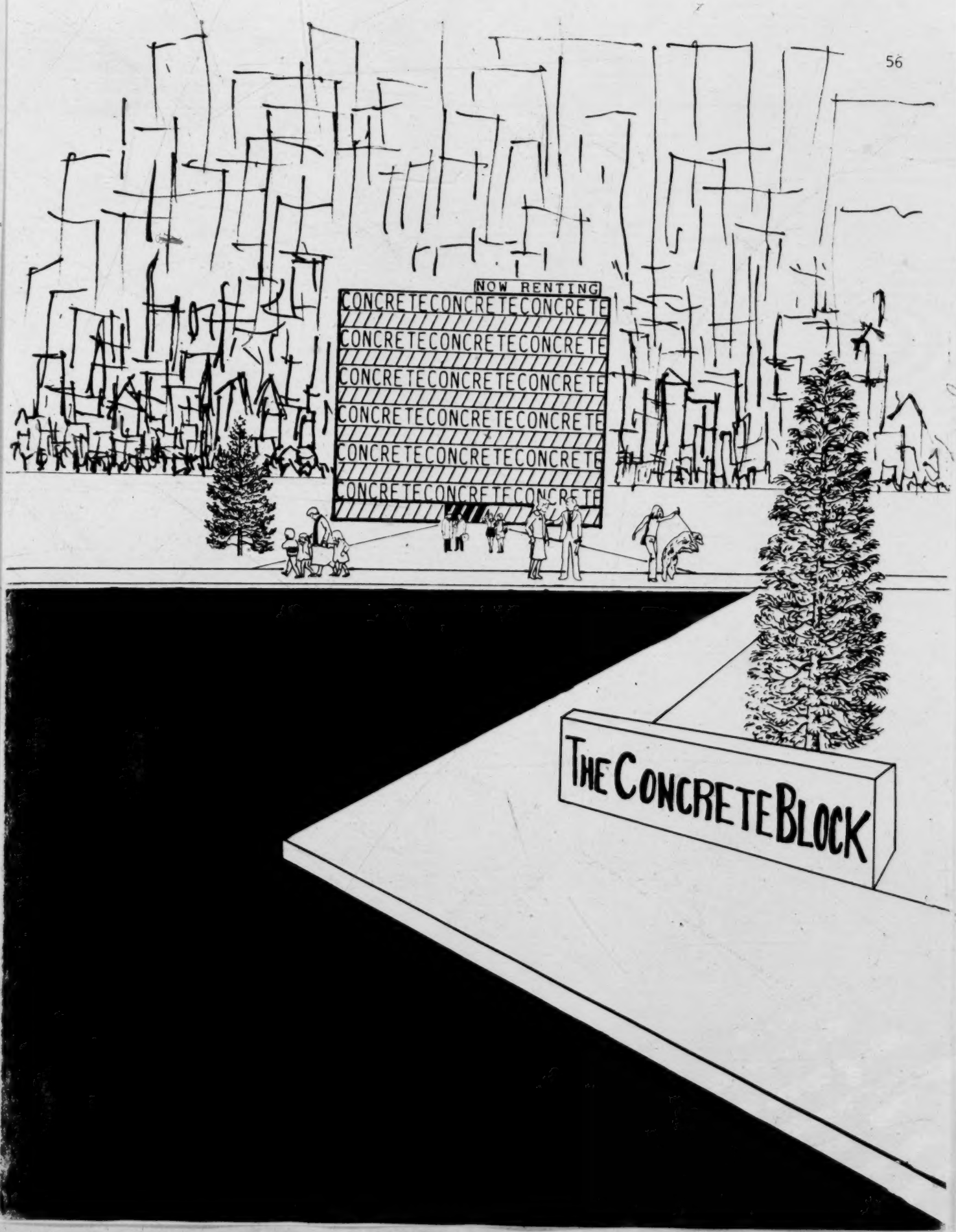
each snow is a love poem
each snow is a dream
each snow is a love poem
each snow is a dream

each poem is a snowflake
each poem is a dream
each poem is a snowflake
each love is a dream

love is a poem
snow is a dream
love is a poem
snow is a dream

love love love love
poem poem poem poem

The Concrete Block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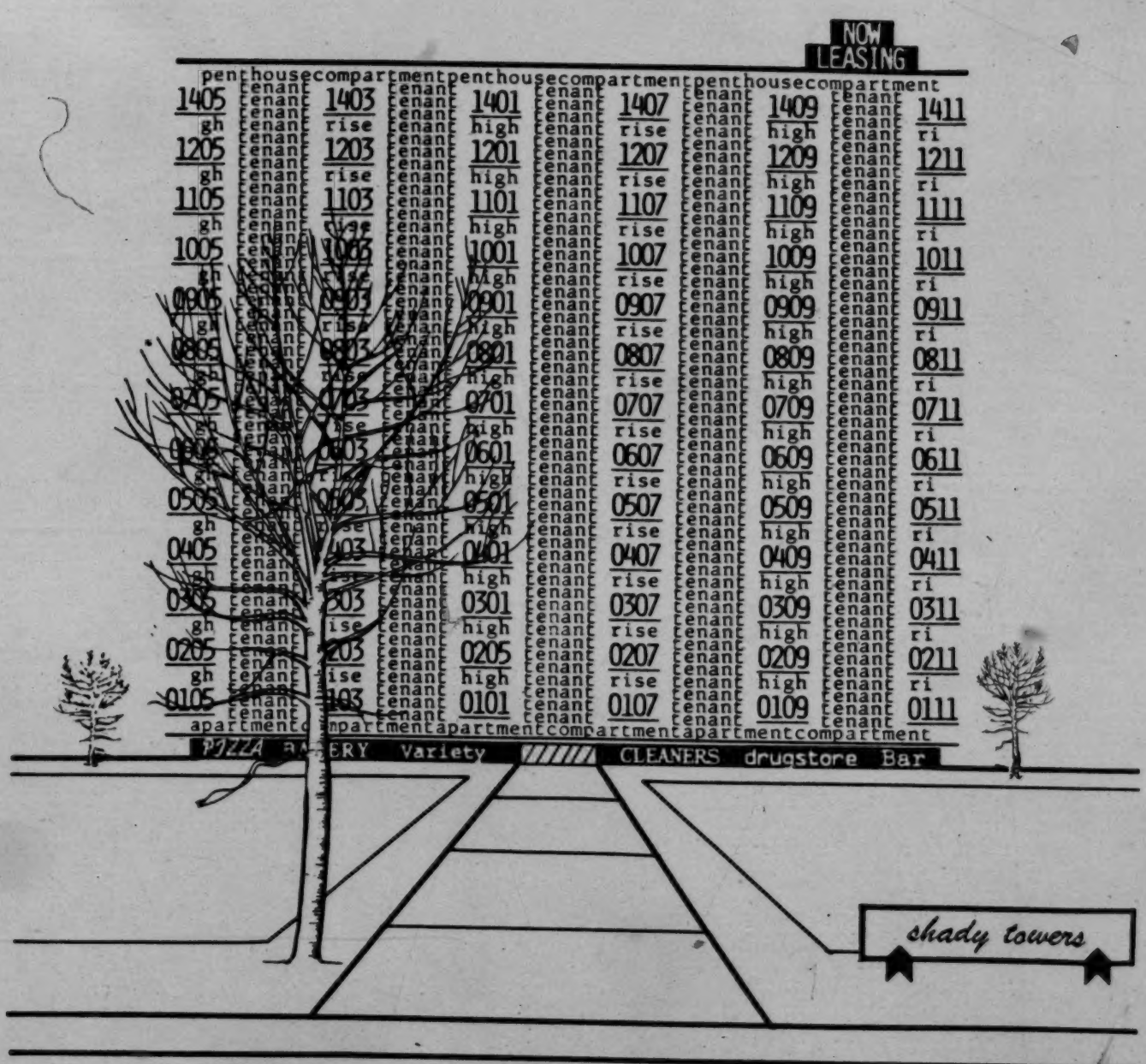
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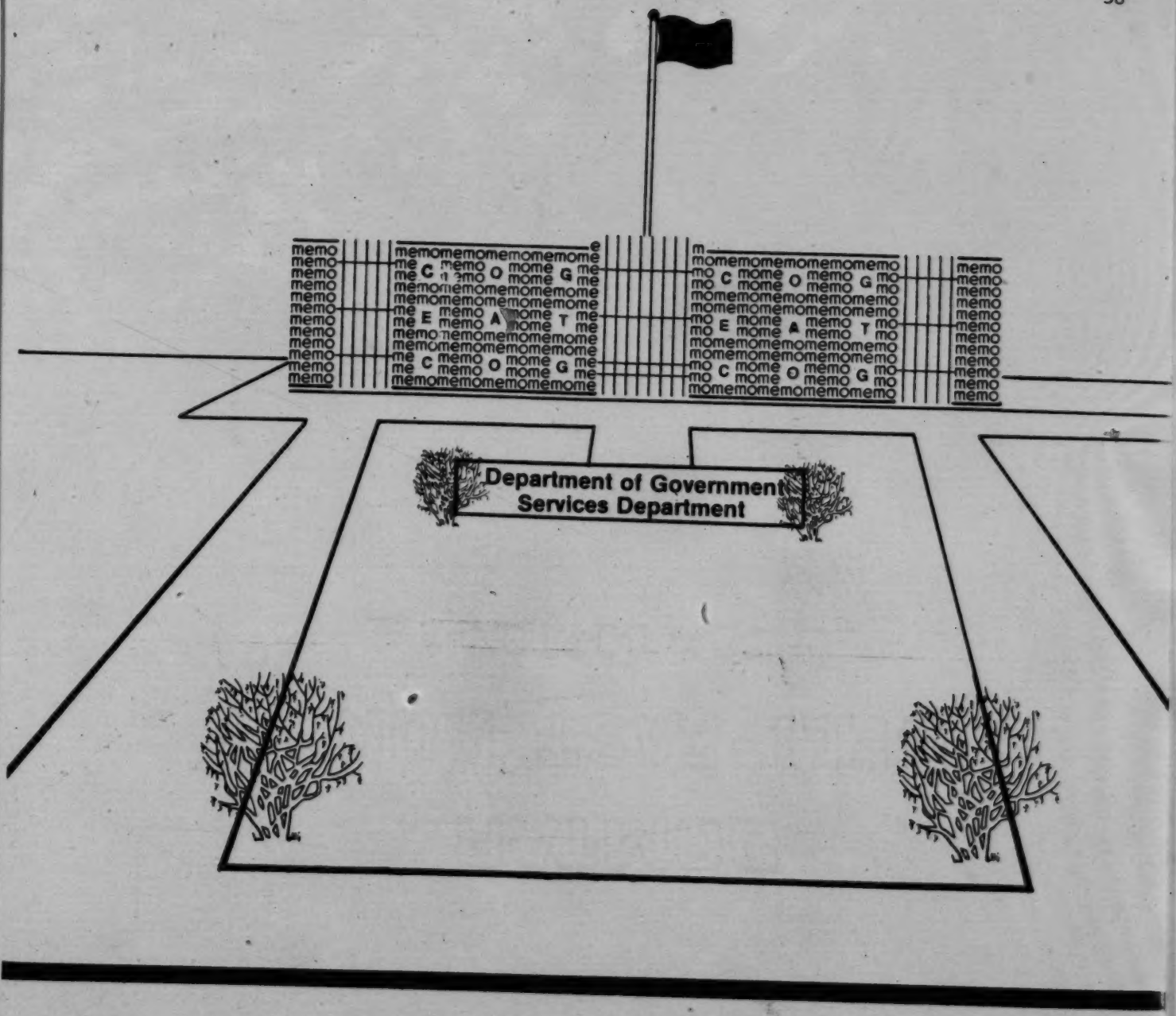
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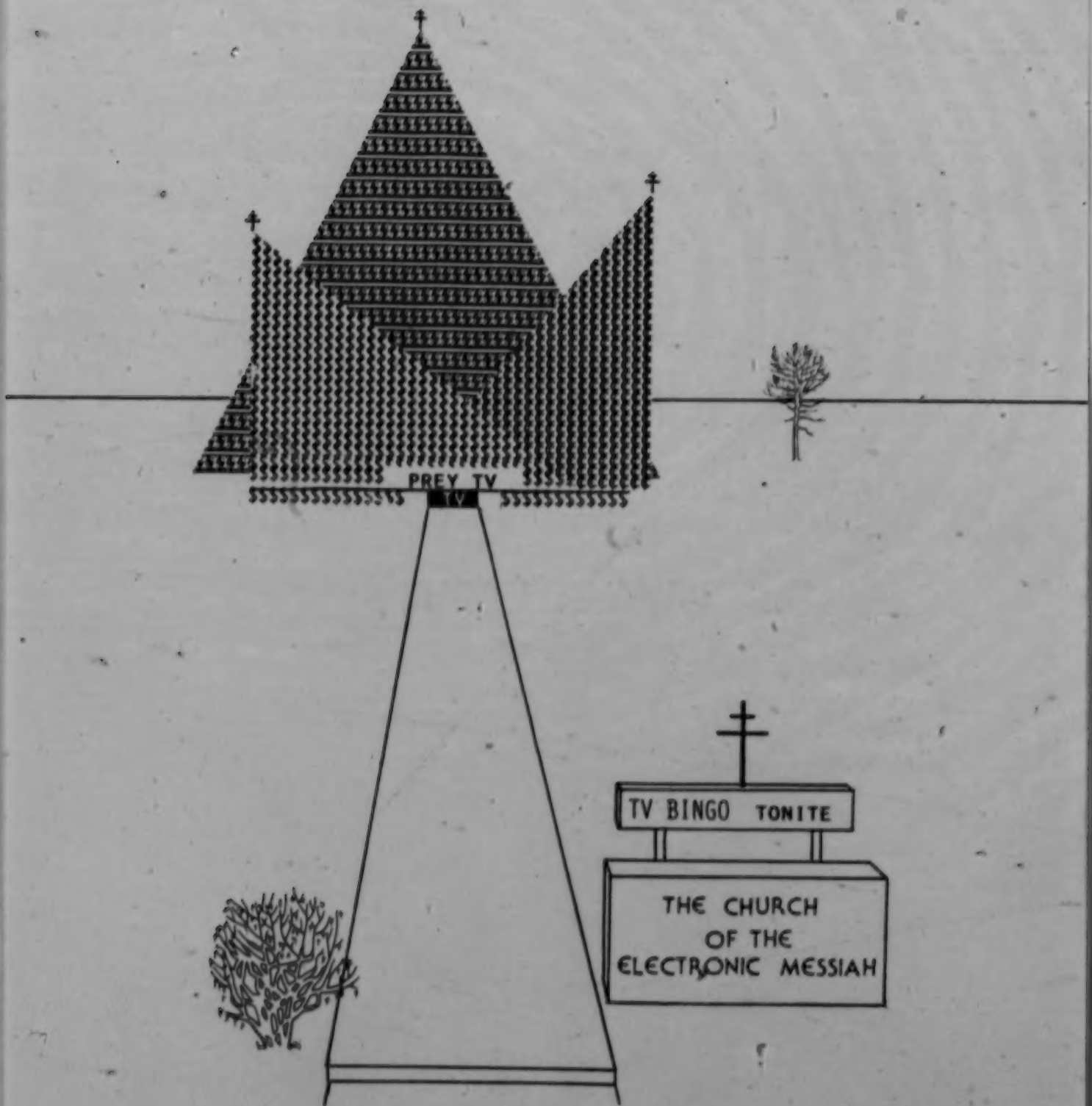
Services Department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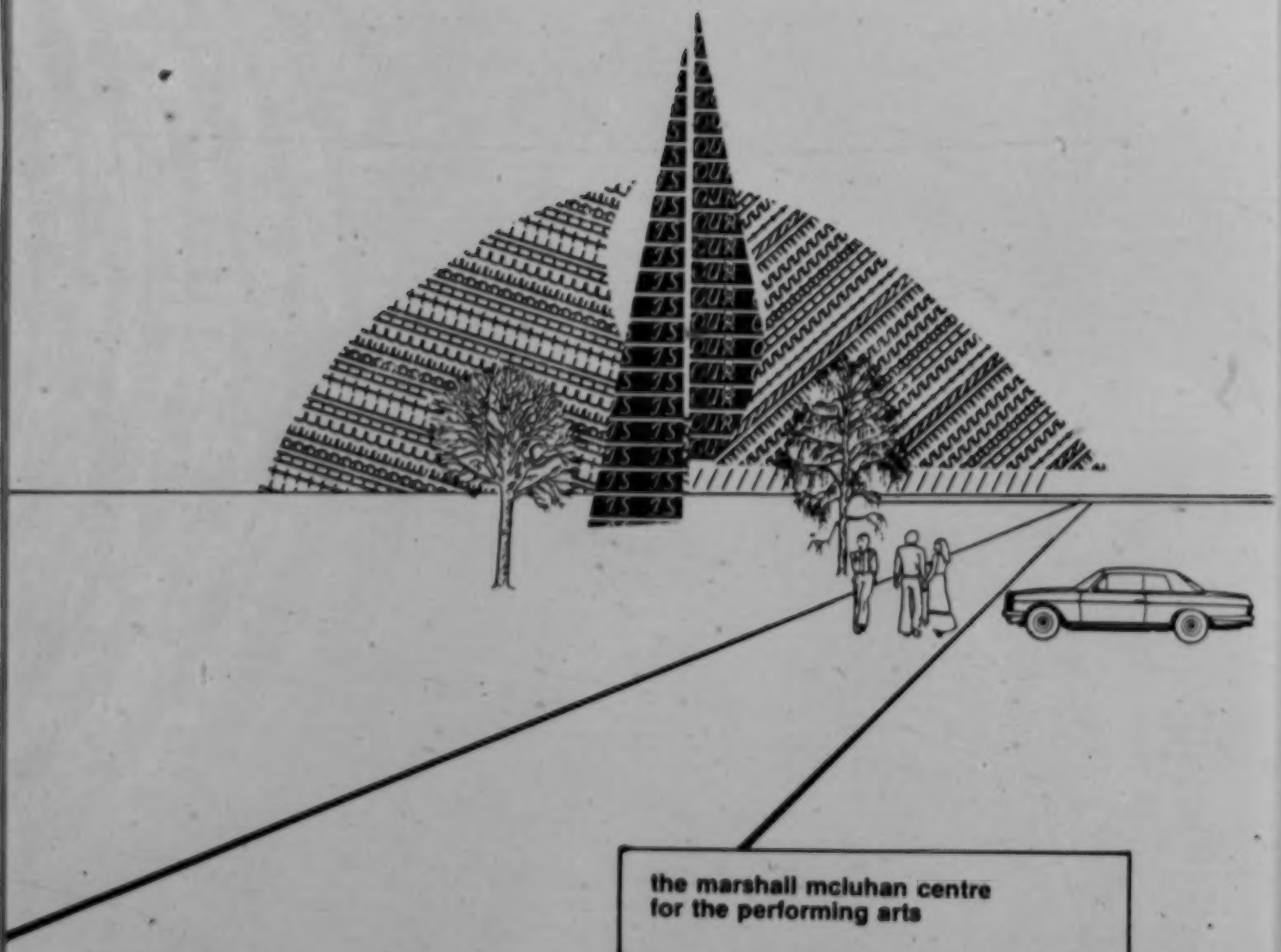
the marshall mcluhan centre
for the performing arts

APPENDIX A

Translations from "Embroidered Paper"

Page 3

"The Stone Cross" - titled after a classic short story by the Western Ukrainian writer Vasyl Stefanyk (1871-1936), who movingly described how a peasant named Ivan Didukh erected a stone cross on his land before emigrating to Canada so that his neighbours would remember him whenever they cast eyes upon it. The image is created out of the letter x, because it alludes to St. Andrew, the patron saint of Christian Ukraine. Stefanyk wrote "The Stone Cross" in 1899, immediately after Stefan Didukh, the real character portrayed in the story, emigrated to the Interlake region of Manitoba.

Page 5

"The Garden" - this piece comments, in an indirect way, on some of the eating habits of Ukrainians. Planted clockwise from the top right corner, after a row of decorative "flowers," are onions, parsley, dill, beans and lettuce; corn, MELONS, CABBAGE, peas, peppers, TOMATOES [and] potatoes; then cucumbers, carrots, beets and garlic. Along the outside margins are RASPBERRY and GOOSEBERRY bushes, while the

bottom line reads "sunflowersunnyday." Oh yes -- a line in the pea patch exclaims, "O, a bird among the peas."

Page 6

"The literate writer of pysanky" - a typographic comment on the fact that traditional Ukrainian Easter eggs are not painted, but written. The word pysanka is derived from the verb pysaty, "to write."

Page 7

"Sing the praises of Ivan Velychkovsky" - this baroque form, known as a labyrinth, salutes a Ukrainian poet (d. 1726) whose work I first became acquainted with in 1974. The text and the title are the same: "Velychaiem Ivana Velychkovskoho."

Page 8

This untitled poem was inspired by the work of the Ukrainian futurist poet, Mikhailo Semenko, who disappeared in the purges of the 1930s. The text reads: **"And what's this -- poesy/painting? / I ASK YOU: Shevchenko or Semenko? / the electrified muse is the revolver of the revolution / Or maybe you have other Wishes? / Da Da Da Da Da Da / NYET! / one step forward and two steps back -- such is**

our literary foxtrot / dancing are / [here the sound plays on the word pan, which rhymes with the German word mann and best translates as "Herr"] / pan doctor, pan director / pan editor, pan engineer / pandora, panee Pchilka [Mrs. Pchilka], Panteleimon Kulish / and panfuturist / PA-NIC! / Mayakovsky lost his trousers! / and snot's dripping from his nose / DRIP DRIP DRIP DRIP / he's a capital fellow this Muscovite chap / TOGETHER we'll send flowers / to comrade Stalin".

Page 9

"Khokhol Holota" - this grim faced character is a portrait of the new Soviet man formed by Stalinist society. The khokhol in the title is the derogatory term that Russian chauvinists apply to Ukrainians -- meaning ignorant, provincial peasant -- and the face is created as follows: forehead, "KGB"; eyes, "PARTY / STALIN / PARTY"; ears, "CENSORSHIP"; nose, "USSR" and other Soviet acronyms; mouth, propaganda, lies, dadada and PRAVDA". The lines on the face, "HUNGER" and "SIBERIA", refer to the 1930s, and the jaw is created by the words "concentration camps, fear, suspicion and terror".

APPENDIX B

Notes to "Song of Leaving"

Page 12

"Song of Leaving" - this is a sad song of parting, originally about a young man going off to join Ukrainian nationalist partisans. Title of original: "Ia siohodni vid Vas vid'izhdzhaiu" - "I am leaving you today".

Page 13

"The Song of the Coquettes" - a chirpy, cheerful love song which I have reinterpreted in a flirtatious spirit. Title of original: "Oi, u vyshnevomu sadochku" - "O, in the cherry orchard".

Page 14

"Ivanka's Song" - a beautiful song about love in the springtime. I have retained some of the images from the original, but provided the Kiev setting because of the romance I associate with that ancient city. Title of original: "Bili Kashtany" - "White Chestnuts".

Page 15

"Go now, goodbye..." - a love song with a hauntingly beautiful melody which I have reinterpreted as a song of farewell. Title of original: "Ivanku,

Ivanku - "Johnny, Johnny".

Page 16

"Yevdokha's Complaint" - this is a close translation of one of the most popular songs sung at Ukrainian weddings once people have had a few drinks. Title of original: "Mala ia muzha piiaka" - "I had a drunkard husband".

Page 17

"My mother used to beat me" - another very popular traditional song which I have translated as literally as possible. Title of original: "Byla mene maty" - "Mother used to beat me".

Page 18

"God Eternal" - this reinterpretation attempts to capture the grandeur of the original carol, which is a favourite at Christmas time. Title of original: "Boh prydvichnyi" - "God Eternal".

Page 19

"The Caroller's Carol" - this free rendering strives to capture the hearty goodwill of the spirit of the traditional song of holiday greeting that it is based on. Title of original: "Dobray vechir tobi" - "Good evening to you".

APPENDIX C

Translations from "Autobiographica"

Page 21

"I am an embroiderer of verses"

Page 22

"I, in the spring"

Page 23

"I dance in the fields in summer"

Page 24

"I am an artist on a paper stage"

Page 25

"What I saw in the mirror"

Page 26

"The story of my life"

Page 27

"I, under a microscope"

Page 28

"I am an automaton, a technocrat"

APPENDIX D

A note concerning "Variations on a Theme"

This series explores various moods and some of the sculptural qualities of the Ukrainian letter ia, which looks like a backwards r, is pronounced like the German ja, and means "I". Ia also happens to be the first letter in my first name, Jaroslaw.

VITA

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PLACE OF BIRTH: Toronto, Ontario

YEAR OF BIRTH: 1952

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION AND DEGREES

University of Toronto
Toronto, Ontario
1971-1976 Honours B.A.

Banff School of Fine Arts
Banff, Alberta
1972-1974 Creative Writing

HONOURS AND AWARDS

The Bliss Carmen Award for Poetry
Banff School of Fine Arts
1972

Banff School of Fine Arts Scholarships
Banff School of Fine Arts
1973, 1974

Scarborough College Bursary
University of Toronto
1974-1975

Explorations Grant
The Canada Council
1974

RELATED WORK EXPERIENCE:

Instructor in Creative Writing
University of Alberta
1978-1979

Editor
Scarborough College, University of Toronto
1975-1976 Scarborough Fair: An Anthology of Literature and Poetry

Editorial Assistant
Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies
1977-1981 Ukrainian Canadians: A Survey of their Portrayal in English-language Works

History of the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church of Canada, 1918-1952

A Filmography of Ukrainian-Canadian Films, 1921-1980 (co-researcher and editor)

Editorial Committee Member
Ukrainian Canadian Students' Union
1977-1981 Student: Canada's Newspaper for Ukrainian Students

Documentary Radio Producer
University of Alberta
1979-1981 "Voiceprint: Speech, language, communications technology and the literary arts in a changing world"

Editor
Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies
1979-1981 Identifications: Ethnicity and the Writer in Canada

Lyricist
The Odessa Group, Toronto
1975-1976 The Offering
Song of Leaving

PUBLICATIONS

(1) Poetry in Canadian Forum, Descant, Waves, Quarry and other magazines and journals (1972-1976).

(2) "Yuriy Tarnawsky, Meningitis", Journal of Ukrainian Graduate Studies, Vol. IV, Number 1, Spring 1979, pp. 116-119.

(3) "'Identifications: Ethnicity and the Writer in Canada' -- Some Impressions and Reflections", Journal of Ukrainian Studies, Vol. V, Number 1, Spring 1980, pp. 56-62.

(4) "'A word in a foreign language': Some Ukrainian Influences in George Ryga's Work", Identifications: Ethnicity and the Writer in Canada, Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1981.